

Clean Water Act Source Protection Committee Chair

The Ontario government has created the Clean Water Act and passed the first set of regulations under the Act. These include the Source Protection Areas and Regions, Source Protection Committees, Terms of Reference, Time Limits, and Miscellaneous Regulations.

This legislation sets prevention as its fundamental principle. Keeping the sources of our drinking water free of contamination is smarter, safer and more effective than cleaning up problems after the fact.

Local communities are best positioned to decide what protective measures are needed and how best to carry them out. A key focus of the legislation is the production of locally developed, science-based drinking water source protection assessment reports and source protection plans.

Source Protection Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The Clean Water Act requires that source protection committees be established, which are responsible for leading the development of the terms of reference, the assessment reports and source protection plans. The Source Protection Committees Regulation requires that a source protection committee be made up of representatives from watershed stakeholders (such as municipal, agriculture, landowners,

industry, environmental non-government organizations) and members of the public at large. The committee will work together with municipalities, conservation authorities, and provincial agencies.

The source protection committee will lead the development of the three pieces of documentation that will complete the source protection planning process: (1) a terms of reference, (2) an assessment report, and (3) a source protection plan. The committee will do this by following the Act, its regulations, Director's rules (in respect of assessment reports), and guidance material created by the ministry, while working collaboratively with municipalities and source protection authorities.

Source Protection Authority:

organization whose responsibilities include providing administrative and technical support to the source protection committee and the source protection planning process. In most cases this is the Conservation Authority Board.

Source Protection Committee Chairs

The Minister of the Environment will appoint the chair through a Minister's Letter of Appointment and will consider any recommendations received from the source protection authority or, for a committee set up for a source protection region, recommendations received from the lead source protection authority.

Chair Qualifications

The ministry has developed guidance material that includes qualifications that the source protection authorities should consider when selecting candidates to recommend to the Minister. Some of these are:

- Expressed willingness to remain neutral;
- Advanced negotiation, mediation, and facilitation skills;
- Proven leadership skills, team facilitation skills, and motivation skills; and
- Familiarity with the rules of operation for committee processes.

Identifying and Nominating Chairs

There are a number of ways to find potential committee chair candidates, including; advertising and/or inviting interested parties through advertisements in local newspapers, placing advertisements/flyers in libraries, municipal offices, community centres, universities, etc. Advertisements and flyers should set out the minimum qualifications as well as the application process. In addition, the source protection authority could approach key watershed stakeholders directly and ask them to submit a potential candidate. Source protection authorities, may choose to interview potential candidates.

The source protection authority will forward the names of the top three candidates for the committee chair, along with the candidates' submission packages, to the ministry for the Minister to consider. The source protection

authority is also encouraged to forward a recommendation with the supporting rationale.

Appointment of the Chairs

After receiving the information from the source protection authority, the Minister may consider the recommended candidates, including why each nominee is interested in the position of chair as well as their qualifications. The Minister will then appoint the chair of the source protection committee. The Minister is not required to select from the recommended candidates when making the appointment. The name of the appointed chair will be posted on the Public Appointment Secretariat website.

Chair Roles and Responsibilities

The Source Protection Committees Regulation provides that the chair is responsible for guiding the effective operation of the committee. The chair will accomplish this by:

- Chairing committee meetings;
- Preparing and submitting quarterly status reports on progress of committee work to the source protection authority;
- Facilitating discussions in order to reach consensus-based decisions;
- Following Rules of Procedure and Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy that the committee establishes.

The chair's time commitment is anticipated to be related to the size and complexity of the source protection region and areas ranging from 2 to 3 days a week for large committees to 2 to 3 days a month for small committees.

It is expected that the source protection committee chairs will meet regularly with the Minister or ministry staff to provide updates and receive new information. The chair would be expected to provide appropriate information to committee members and stakeholders.

Background information on the Clean Water Act is available on the Ministry of the Environment website at: ontario.ca/cleanwater.

Further local information on drinking water source protection can be found at:
conservation-ontario.on.ca/source_protection/otherswpregionsindex.htm



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